

RHODE ISLAND STANDARDS  
FOR THE APPROVAL OF  
EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

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Rhode Island Department of Education  
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## **FOREWORD**

This document provides the four (4) overarching standards used by the Rhode Island Department of Education to assess all educator preparation programs at our institutions of higher education that lead to the issuance of a certificate by the Office of Teacher Preparation, Certification & Professional Development. Each of these standards is described in greater detail through a set of indicators that articulate specific elements of the standard. These indicators are classified as either process indicators or performance indicators to distinguish the types of evidence that might be used during the program approval process.

These standards apply to all undergraduate and graduate programs that lead to the issuance of an initial teaching certificate as well as graduate programs that lead to advanced certification in areas such as school leadership, school psychology, school counselor, etc. The standards make frequent reference to the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards (RIBTS). For advanced educator certificate programs the RIBTS will be replaced with the appropriate national professional association standards, e.g. the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards would be used to evaluate school leadership programs. When more than one set of nationally recognized standards is available, the institution of higher education selects the standards they will use to assess candidate performance and provides the Department of Education with a rationale for the selection of the standards. Once the institution selects the standards to be used to assess student performance, program faculty respond to the four (4) program approval standards in the same manner as faculty in programs that lead to a teaching certificate.

## **Rhode Island Program Approval Standards**

The following four standards provide the overall structure for the review of teacher preparation programs in Rhode Island.

1. Prospective educators recommended for licensure by Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs are proficient in the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards.
2. Prospective educators in Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, develop the dispositions, and practice the skills that are encompassed in the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards and the opportunity to develop their learning in a variety of high quality field sites with professionals who model effective educational practice, assume responsibility for educating prospective colleagues, and are committed to ongoing professional development.
3. Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs and their institutions demonstrate a commitment to affirming the diversity of our state, our communities, and our public schools by preparing educators who can work effectively with students, families, community members, and colleagues from diverse backgrounds to create learning communities in which all students succeed.
4. Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs have: adequate resources to ensure a faculty that is engaged in scholarship, demonstrates exceptional expertise in its teaching fields, and is actively involved in PK-12 schools; structures that ensure coherence within and across programs; and a systematic process of evaluation to ensure program improvement.

As indicated in the foreword, each of these standards is described in greater detail through a set of indicators that articulate specific elements of the standard. These indicators are classified as either process indicators or performance indicators to distinguish the types of evidence that might be used during the program approval process.

1. Prospective educators recommended for licensure by Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs are proficient in the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards.

## **Process**

*1.01 Continuous Assessment.* Prospective educators are assessed through an ongoing process that begins with admission into a program and continues through the recommendation for licensure.

*1.02 Admission into the Program.* Prospective educators are admitted to certification programs based upon clearly articulated criteria that address the students' potential to meet the standards for licensure.<sup>1</sup>

*1.03 Advisement, Feedback, and Counseling Throughout the Program.* Prospective educators' progress towards meeting the standards is monitored and they receive academic and professional advisement from admission through completion of their educational programs.

## **Performance**

*1.04 Determination of Readiness For Student Teaching or Supervised Internship:* Prospective educators demonstrate their readiness for student teaching or supervised internship through an evaluation of their performance with respect to the *Readiness to Student Teach Standards*.

*1.05 Assessment at the Completion of Clinical Experiences:* Prospective educators demonstrate their performance with respect to the standards for the completion of student teaching or supervised internship through an evaluation process that is shared by the college or university supervisor and the cooperating teacher or internship supervisor.

*1.06 Assessment as the Basis for Recommendation for License.* Approved programs make recommendations for licensure based on prospective educators' performance with respect to the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards.<sup>2</sup>

*1.07 Validity of Assessment System.* Assessment systems are aligned with educator standards and with instructional processes, use multiple assessments and various methodologies, and have expectations that are clearly communicated to prospective educators.

*1.08 Reliability of Assessment System.* Assessment systems yield fair, accurate, and consistent evaluation of prospective educators.

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<sup>1</sup> If admission to an institution and admission to a program are concurrent, the criteria for admission to the institution must meet this standard.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Recommendations for licensure are the sole responsibility of the institution of higher education; however, the institution is encouraged to include school-based personnel in this process.

2. Prospective educators in Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, develop the dispositions, and practice the skills that are encompassed in the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards and the opportunity to develop their learning in a variety of high quality field sites with professionals who model effective educational practice, assume responsibility for educating prospective colleagues, and are committed to ongoing professional development.

## **Process**

*2.01 Professional and Pedagogical Studies:* Prospective educators follow a well-planned scope and sequence of courses and experiences to develop the knowledge, dispositions, and skills encompassed in the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards.<sup>3</sup>

*General Knowledge:* Prospective teachers create learning experiences using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live.

*Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge:* Prospective teachers create learning experiences that reflect an understanding of central concepts, structures, and tools of inquiry of the disciplines they teach.<sup>4</sup>

*Learning and Human Development:* Prospective teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.

*Diversity of Learners:* Prospective teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.

*Thinking Skills:* Prospective teachers create instructional opportunities to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

*Learning Environment:* Prospective teachers to create a learning environment that encourages appropriate standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

*Collaboration:* Prospective teachers foster collaborative relationships with colleagues and families to support students' learning.

*Communication Skills:* Prospective teachers use effective communication as the vehicle through which students explore, conjecture, discuss, and investigate new ideas.

*Assessment:* Prospective teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to support the continuous development of the learner.

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<sup>3</sup> The adoption of the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards, including standards and indicators, by preparation programs is assumed even though only the more global standards statements are reprinted in this document.

<sup>4</sup>The institution delineates the specific national content standards for each certificate area. If national standards are not available for a content area the institution will structure the program on documented research from national, state, and professional associations. When more than one set of national standards is available, the institution will provide a rationale for the standards selected.

*Reflection:* Prospective teachers reflect on their practice and assume responsibility for their own professional development by actively seeking opportunities to learn and grow as professionals.

*Professional Standards:* Prospective teachers maintain professional standards guided by social, legal, and ethical principles.

*2.02 Subject Matter Knowledge:* Prospective educators develop a deep understanding of the subject matter of their area of certification.

*2.03 Technology:* Prospective educators develop an understanding of the role of technology in education and learn how to use technology as an instructional and administrative tool.

*2.04 Additional Rhode Island Certification Requirements* Prospective educators develop any additional knowledge and or skills required by Rhode Island educational law or regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education.

*2.05 Coherence:* Prospective educators pursue coherent educational studies that are grounded in research and theory.

*2.06 Extensive Clinical Experience:* Prospective educators complete purposeful and sequenced field experiences, including field experience prior to student teaching or internship periods. Through student teaching or an internship they have the opportunity to experience all aspects of teaching.

*2.07 Clinical Experience in a Variety of Settings:* Prospective educators complete field experiences in a variety of educational settings, including schools which serve culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students and classrooms that serve students with a range of abilities, including students with exceptional needs.

*2.08 Effective Field Sites:* Prospective educators complete field experiences in settings where they have the opportunity to practice their learning in a way that is consistent with the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards.

### **Performance**

*2.09 Effective Cooperating Teachers and Internship Supervisors:* Approved programs place prospective educators exclusively with cooperating teachers and internship supervisors whose practice is consistent with the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards. The cooperating teachers and internship supervisors know how to help prospective educators develop and how to evaluate prospective educators in order to make a recommendation regarding successful performance with respect to the standards.

*2.10 Recruit and Provide Professional Development for Cooperating Teachers and Internship Supervisors:* Approved programs recruit cooperating teachers, internship supervisors, or mentors whose practice is consistent with the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards and who are committed to supporting the development of prospective educators. The programs provide professional development opportunities and other incentives to help these educators enhance their effectiveness in these roles.

*2.11 College/University and School Partnerships.* Approved programs establish collaborative and respectful relationships between college and university faculty and their institution and field-based educators, their schools, and their school districts that benefit both the institution of higher education and the PK-12 school district for the common goal of preparing prospective educators.

3. ***Diversity***<sup>5</sup>: Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs and their institutions demonstrate a commitment to affirming the diversity of our state, our communities, and our public schools by preparing educators who can work effectively with students, families, community members, and colleagues from diverse backgrounds to create learning communities in which all students succeed.

*3.01 Curriculum:* Prospective educators develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to preparing them to be effective teachers of diverse students. The preparation includes a curriculum that engages all students in issues of diversity in our world and in our schools. The curriculum also expands the socio-cultural awareness of prospective educators by helping them become more aware of how their own world views are shaped by their life experiences. The curriculum helps prospective educators develop affirming attitudes towards individuals from diverse backgrounds and a commitment to making schools places where all students succeed. Throughout their preparation, prospective educators learn about diverse communities and students and learn to teach in diverse communities and classrooms. They learn to create classrooms in which instruction builds from the cultures of their students communities.

*3.02 Field Experiences that Capitalize on the Diversity of PK-12 Schools:* Prospective educators successfully complete field experiences that are designed to assure interaction with exceptional students, and students from different ethnic, racial, gender, socio-economic, language, and religious groups. Through these experiences prospective educators examine issues of diversity in teaching and learning. Skilled cooperating teachers and college and university faculty help the prospective educators use these experiences to improve their ability to teach students from diverse backgrounds effectively.

*3.03 An Environment that Values Diversity:* Colleges and universities and their teacher preparation programs make issues of socio-cultural awareness, affirmation of diversity, and the preparation of culturally responsive teachers central to their mission. Colleges and universities establish a campus environment that promotes and sustains a diverse community. They capitalize on the community's diversity to promote deeper understanding of issues of equity and diversity in our state, our communities, and our schools.

*3.04 Faculty:* Colleges and universities and the teacher preparation programs recruit, hire, support, and retain a diverse faculty. Prospective educators have the opportunity to learn from faculty members whose diverse backgrounds enable prospective educators to view their craft through a wide lens.

*3.05 Students:* Colleges and universities and their teacher preparation programs recruit, admit, support, and retain a diverse student body. The program's admission processes, curriculum, access to student services, and counseling and mentoring programs are designed to support the preparation of a more diverse teaching force. Prospective teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds and with experiences that differ from the other prospective teachers find their participation is elicited, valued, and affirmed throughout the preparation program.

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<sup>5</sup> Diversity is used throughout this standard to address ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual-orientation, and geographical area.

4. Rhode Island Educator Certification Programs have: adequate resources to ensure a faculty that is engaged in scholarship, demonstrates exceptional expertise in its teaching fields, and is actively involved in PK-12 schools; structures that ensure coherence within and across programs; and a systematic process of evaluation to ensure program improvement.

### **Process**

*4.01 Accredited Institution:* Approved programs are offered at an institution that is accredited by NEASC.

*4.02 Qualified Faculty Members:* The Professional Education Faculty is composed of individuals with exceptional expertise as teachers and scholars in their teaching fields.

*4.03 Faculty Responsibilities:* The Professional Education Faculty is composed of individuals who are involved in teaching, scholarship, and service.

*4.04 Faculty Connected to PK-12 Education.* The Professional Education Faculty is involved with practice in PK-12 schools.

*4.05 Professional Development of Faculty.* Approved programs ensure the ongoing professional development of their faculty.

*4.06 Resources:* Approved programs assure access to adequate resources to support teaching and scholarship, including the necessary facilities, equipment, library, curriculum resources, educational technology, and financial resources to support quality programs.

*4.07 Coherence Within and Across Programs:* Approved programs ensure that coherence exists between the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards and student outcomes, courses, field experiences, instruction, and assessment, both within and across programs.

### **Performance**

*4.08 Quality of Instruction:* The Professional Education Faculty exemplifies the qualities of effective instruction, including the proficiencies described in the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards, through its teaching and other professional work.

*4.09 Professional Community:* Approved programs support collaboration among higher education faculty, school personnel and other members of the professional community to prepare new educators and to improve the quality of education of children.

*4.10 Commitment to High Quality and Improvement.* Approved programs engage in regular and systematic evaluations (including, but not limited to, information obtained through student assessment, and collection of data from students, recent graduates, and other members of the professional community) and use these findings to improve the preparation of prospective educators through the modification and improvement of the program.